

Official Rules of Parliamentary Procedure Greater Washington Conference on International Affairs (GWCIA)

General Rules

Scope of the Rules

These rules are self-sufficient and shall be considered adopted in advance of the first session. No other rules or procedures are applicable.

Language

English will be the working language of all GWCIA committees.

Attire

All delegates will be expected to wear Western professional business attire during committee sessions.

Conduct

Delegates are expected to maintain decorum during GWCIA committee sessions. This includes respecting staff decisions at all times, being recognized before addressing the committee, standing when addressing the committee, and refraining from the use of undiplomatic language. The Chair will warn delegates if their conduct does not conform to these guidelines. If misconduct continues after this warning, the Chair may take action up to and including the revocation of voting rights.

Topics for Debate

A committee's topics for debate will be established by the Secretariat and communicated to the delegates prior to the opening of the Conference.

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The Secretariat, Dais, and General Procedure

Secretariat

The Secretariat is the main administrative body of GWCIA and is responsible for the administration of the conference. It is led by the Secretary General.

Committee

The committee is an official meeting of delegates sanctioned to carry out select business of the United Nations General Assemblies.

Delegate

A delegate is an individual chosen to represent a member nation of the United Nations in one of its committees. Each delegate has one vote in his committee.

Chair

The Chair is the individual chosen by the Secretariat to administer the functions of a committee. The Chair opens and closes each committee session, enforces these rules, recognizes speakers, puts questions to a vote, and announces decisions. The Chair has the right to act at his own discretion to ensure the smooth operation of the committee. To this end, he has ultimate authority over the committee's proceedings and the maintenance of order. The Chair has the power to entertain, deny, or question the propriety of any motion. The Chair may not vote on any issue within the committee, whether procedural or substantive.

Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair is an individual chosen by the Secretariat to assist the chairperson in their administrative duties and take on the responsibilities of the chairperson in the event of their absence. A Vice-Chair may not vote on any issue within the committee, whether procedural or substantive.

Appeal of the Chair's Decision

A delegate may motion to appeal the Chair's ruling on a discretionary matter.

- r First, the appealing Member speaks in favor of overturning the Chair's decision.
- r Next, the Chair speaks in defense of the ruling.
- r Finally, the committee votes on overturning the decision. A two-thirds majority is required to overturn the Chair's decision.

Quorum

A majority of the expected Members (one half of the total plus one) of a committee must be present for committee session to be opened, for debate to proceed, and for any substantive votes to be taken. The number of expected Members shall be communicated to the committee Chair by the Secretariat prior to the conference.

Substantive vs. Procedural Matters

- r Substantive matters are resolutions or amendments.
- r Procedural matters are any points or motions that are not substantive.
- r All delegations are required to vote on procedural matters.

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Voting and Speaking

Voting Rights

- r In a Committee, Delegations represent either Member-states or Observer-states.
- r Each Member-state will have one vote in all matters.
- r Observer-states may vote on procedural matters only. These delegations may not vote on substantive matters (amendments or resolutions). On procedural matters, each Observer-state will have one vote.

Vote Passage

- r Simple Majority: A simple majority is when more delegations vote in favor of passage than against passage.
- r Two-Thirds Majority: A two-thirds majority is when twice as many delegations vote in favor of passage than against passage.

Abstention

Delegations are permitted to "abstain" only when voting on substantive matters (resolutions or amendments). Delegations may not "abstain" on procedural matters.

- r Any delegation that chooses to "abstain" is by definition not voting. As such, these delegations are not counted when determining whether or not the substantive matter has passed. In other words, simple majorities and two-thirds majorities are based on the number of delegations voting in favor of or against passage; delegations that "abstain" are not included in this number.
- r Any Member-states that respond as "present and voting" when the Chair calls roll at the beginning of the Conference may not abstain. (See "Calling Roll" under "Outline of the Order of Committee" for more information.)

See "Voting Procedures" below for more information.

Speaking

No Member may address a committee without being recognized by the Chair. The Chair may call a speaker to order if his remarks are not relevant to the topic being discussed.

- r Yields: Speakers must announce yields before beginning to speak. Yields are not in order until after an agenda has been adopted by the committee, or during any procedural debate. A delegate speaking on a substantive matter may announce their desire to yield remaining time in one of the following manners:
 1. To Comments (this is the default if no yield is specified, even if no time remains; see "Comments" below for more information)
 2. To the Chair
 3. To Questions
 4. To another delegation

Yielded time may not be yielded. That is, if a speaker yields his time to another delegation, and if that delegation does not use all of the time, the remaining time is automatically yielded to the Chair.

5. Comments: Two 30-second comments are automatically in order when no yield is specified by a speaker. The Chair will recognize two delegations to make 30-second comments relevant to the speaker's remarks. Comments are in order only during debate of substantive matters.
6. Right of Reply: Delegations may request a Right of Reply only when they wish to respond to an objectionable remark regarding his personal integrity or that of his country. Requests for a Right of Reply must be submitted to the Chair in writing. Requests will be granted at the Chair's discretion. The Chair's decision on these requests are not subject to appeal. Rights of Reply to Rights of Reply are never in order.

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Resolutions

A couple of GWCIA "house rules":

- a. Pre-written resolutions are not allowed.
- b. More than one resolution can pass for the same topic.

I. Structure: When writing resolutions, a strict format must be followed.

A. A Working Paper is a draft resolution "in progress" that has not been formally introduced to the committee.

B. Working paper headings should include the committee name and the topic.

C. After the heading, the country names of all sponsors and signatories should be listed.

- r Sponsors: Delegations who contributed to drafting the resolution. Observer-states and NGO's may not sponsor resolutions.

- r Signatories: Delegations who support introducing a working paper to the committee for debate as a draft resolution. Observer-states and NGO's may be signatories on resolutions.

D. A resolution has two main parts:

- r Perambulatory clauses: While these clauses are not the "meat" of a resolution, they are important because they lay out the problem and the context, thereby underscoring the importance of the resolution and the issue it is addressing.

- r Perambulatory clauses establish precedence by citing existing resolutions, treaties, etc., and they explain what has and has not worked in the past.

- r Each perambulatory clause should end with a comma, and the last perambulatory clause should end with a colon.

- r These clauses come after the sponsors and signatories (before Operative Clauses).

- r Operative clauses: These clauses outline what needs to be done and how it should be implemented.

- r While these clauses are frequently very detailed, at times they are vague for strategic reasons (to gain consensus, for example).

- r Each operative clause should end with a semicolon, and the last operative clause should end with a period.

- r These clauses come after the perambulatory clauses (at the end of the resolution).

II. Working Papers and Draft Resolutions: Working papers (proposed draft resolutions) must be submitted to the Chair in writing for approval.

A. Working papers must have a certain number of sponsors or signatories to be approved by the Chair for committee consideration.

- r The required number is one-third of delegations that indicated their presence at the start of the conference (rounding up, if necessary).

- r Whether or not a working paper meets this requirement is based on its combined number of sponsors and signatories.

B. If the Chair approves a working paper (proposed draft resolution) for committee consideration, the Chair will assign it a number and a sponsor may formally introduce it to the committee as a draft resolution.

C. A sponsor can formally introduce a draft resolution by making a Motion to Introduce Draft Resolution [Chair-assigned number] and reading the operative clauses out loud to the committee. This motion is in order when the floor is open, and it requires a simple majority.

- D. After a draft resolution is formally introduced, the committee body may ask the sponsor(s) grammar, spelling, syntax, and other non-substantive questions.
- E. At this point, a delegation can Motion for a [number]-minute Question and Answer Period, during which the sponsor(s) have the opportunity to answer questions from the committee body.
- F. Draft resolutions may not be referred to as draft resolutions until:
 - r They have the necessary number of signatories
 - r They have been submitted to and approved by the Chair
 - r They have been read out loud to the committee
- G. Question of Competence
 - r This motion is used when a delegate believes that a draft resolution, working paper, or amendment (that has been formally introduced) is not within the scope of the committee, and/or that it would attempt to authorize that which committee cannot authorize.
 - r A Motion to Question the Competence of the Committee must be seconded; the Chair will recognize one speaker for and one against; a simple majority vote is required for passage.
- III. Amendments: Amendments must be submitted to the Chair in writing. There are two types of amendments:
 - A. Friendly Amendments: A friendly amendment has been approved by all sponsors of the draft resolution. It will be incorporated into the resolution immediately after being reviewed by the Chair and read out loud (usually by the Chair) to the committee.
 - B. Unfriendly Amendments: An unfriendly amendment has not been approved by all sponsors of the draft resolution. Unfriendly amendments must be voted on by the entire committee during voting procedures before voting on the entire resolution. Similar to draft resolutions, unfriendly amendments must be submitted to the Chair in writing with sponsors and signatories.

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Outline of the Order of Committee

- I. Calling Roll
 - r All country names will be read out loud by the Chair.
 - r Delegates must respond "present" or "present and voting." Any delegate who responds "present and voting" may not "abstain" during Voting Procedures.
 - r If a delegate is late or does not indicate their presence for any reason, he must send a note to the Chair in order to be counted as "present" or "present and voting." Delegates must indicate their presence to participate in Committee.
- II. Adopting the Agenda
 - r Motion to Open the Primary Speakers' List
 - (a) This is the Primary Speakers' List. It will be referred to again after the first topic of discussion is finished.
 - (b) Chair will verbally select countries and create a formal speaking order. If a delegate is not selected, he should send a note to the chair that he would like to be put on the speakers list.
 - (c) Delegates will then discuss agenda possibilities.
 - (d) This motion requires a simple majority vote.
 - r Motion to Set the Speakers' Time at ____min/sec

- (a) This allows delegates to set the amount of time the speaker may have to discuss agenda possibilities.
- (b) This requires 2 speakers for and 2 against, or 1 and 1 if you are changing the speaking time, and a simple majority vote.

r Motion to Set the Agenda

- (a) Whenever the floor is open (when there is no speaker and when the Chair says "Are there any points or motions on the floor?"), a delegate may make a Motion to Set the Agenda.
- (b) After being recognized by the Chair, the delegate should say, "[Country Name] moves to set the agenda at [desired topic order]."
- (c) A Motion to Set the Agenda requires a simple majority vote.

r Motion to Adopt an Agenda

- (a) After all Agenda variations have been proposed, a delegate should make a Motion to Adopt an Agenda. This motion is for the committee to vote on an agenda to follow for the remainder of the Conference.
- (b) After being recognized by the chair, the delegate should say, "[Country Name] moves to adopt the agenda [state the desired agenda proposal]."
- (c) This requires a simple majority vote.

III. Post-Agenda Adoption

r Motion to Open the General Speakers' List

- (a) This motion would open the General Speakers' List. This Speakers' List is for debating the agenda topic being . (As previously mentioned, the Primary Speakers' List is used only to set the agenda.)
- (b) A Motion to Open the General Speakers' List requires a simple majority vote.

r Motion to Set the Speakers' Time

- (a) The speakers' time set for the Primary Speakers' List will be the default speakers' time for the General Speakers' List.
- (b) The speakers' time can be changed at any time when the floor is open.
- (c) This requires 2 speakers for and 2 against and a simple majority vote.

r A delegation may only be on a speakers' list once at any given time. After speaking, delegations may send a note to the Chair to request that they be added to the speakers' list again.

r Motion for a [number]-minute Moderated/Unmoderated Caucus for the purpose of [desired purpose]

- (a) Caucus time can be used to facilitate debate, lobby for ideas, form coalitions, and write resolutions. A great deal of the real work occurs during caucuses.
- (b) There is no discussion; a simple majority vote is required.
- (c) The Chair may rule this motion out of order. This ruling is not subject to appeal.
- (d) Moderated caucus: allows a more informal level of debate at critical points in the discussion. However, decorum is still maintained.
 - (a) This motion is in order at any time before the closing of debate.
 - (b) When making a Motion for a Moderated Caucus, delegates must specify speaking time. (Therefore, a Motion for a Moderated Caucus would be, "Motion for a [number]-minute Moderated Caucus with [number of seconds or minutes] speaking time for the purpose of [desired purpose].")
 - (c) If a motion for moderated caucus passes, the Chair will depart from the speakers' list and call on delegates at his discretion.
- (e) Unmoderated caucus: allows for delegates to informally discuss topics, work on working papers, and build coalitions.

- (a) This motion is in order at any time before closing debate.
- (b) The time limit specified is subject to the Chair's approval.
- (c) If a motion for an unmoderated caucus passes, there are no set speakers and all rules are suspended. Delegates may move about and discuss matters in groups until the unmoderated caucus expires.

IV. Voting Procedures

r Moving into Voting Procedures:

- (a) Motion to Close Debate: This motion ends all discussion. Once this passes, the body moves directly into voting procedures. See "Conduct During Voting Procedures" for more information.
 - u A Motion to Close Debate requires 2 speakers against and a 2/3-majority vote.
 - u If there are no speakers against, this motion automatically passes.
- (b) Expiration of Speakers' List:
 - (a) First, a Motion to Close the Speakers' List must pass. This requires a simple majority vote. If this motion passes, no additions may be made to the Speakers' List.
 - (b) Then, when the last speaker has finished, the committee automatically enters into voting procedures.

r During Voting Procedures

- (a) When debate has been closed, Voting Procedures will begin.
- (b) Conduct During Voting Procedures
 - (a) No delegates may caucus in any way. This includes passing notes.
 - (b) Points of Order concerning the actual Voting Procedures and Points of Personal Privilege are the only interruptions permitted during Voting Procedures.
 - (c) No one may enter or exit the committee room during voting procedures. Immediately after closing debate, the committee room doors will be barred.
- (c) Motion to Divide the Question: This motion calls for specific operative clauses to be voted on separately from the entire resolution.
 - (a) The delegate proposing this motion must name the clause(s) to be divided.
 - (b) The chair calls 2 speakers for and 2 against, and then, a simple majority vote is required.
 - (c) If a Motion to Divide the Question passes, the body votes on whether or not to include the individual clause(s) identified by the delegate who made the motion in the final resolution. This also requires a simple majority.
 - (d) Thus, to Divide the Question, 2 votes take place, and both require a simple majority to pass:
 - 1. A procedural vote (which also requires 2 speakers for and 2 speakers against)
 - 2. (and, if the procedural vote passes) A substantive vote

r Roll Call Vote

- (a) Each country is called out loud. When called upon, delegations must respond in one of four ways:
 - 1. Yes
 - 2. No
 - 3. Abstain
 - 4. Pass
- (b) If any delegates "pass," the Chair will call on them again after reading through the entire list once. Any delegate who passes during the first round must vote in the

second round, and they may not "abstain."

(a) A roll call vote is granted at the discretion of the chair. No vote is required.

(b) Voting With Rights: During Roll Call Votes, delegates can vote "yes" or "no" "With Rights" when they feel clarification is necessary. (For example, to justify a vote contrary to normal country policy.)

(c) Requests to explain a vote must be submitted in writing to the Chair before the committee enters voting procedures. Requests will be granted at the discretion of the Chair.

(d) Delegates whose requests have been approved will be called on by the Chair to make a brief statement after voting on the resolution in question.

r Order of Precedence for Voting Procedures

(a) Unfriendly Amendments

(b) Division of the Question

(c) Resolution as a whole

V. Other Motions and Points

r Motion to Recess

(a) This motion is used to recess the committee for the purpose of planned meals or until the next day's session.

(b) This requires a simple majority vote.

r Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

(a) After all voting has taken place, a Motion to Adjourn the Meeting would end the Conference until the next time it convenes.

(b) This requires a simple majority vote.

r Point of Order

(a) A Point of Order is used when a Member wishes to draw attention to a possible procedural error made by a Member or by the Chair.

(b) This point must be raised at the time of the incident. The Chair will rule immediately on the matter. Points of Order take precedence over substantive speeches and comments. A Member rising to a Point of Order may not speak on any substantive matters.

r Point of Parliamentary Inquiry

(a) A Point of Parliamentary Procedure is a question to the Chair when a Member is uncertain of the procedural setting of the committee.

(b) This motion may not interrupt a speaker.

r Point of Information

(a) A Point of Information is a question to a speaker.

(b) When a speaker yields to questions, the Chair shall recognize, in turn, those Members of the committee who have questions, as time allows.

(c) Once recognized by the Chair, the Member shall rise and ask one concise question directed to the speaker. The Member will then remain standing while the speaker answers the question, and then return to his seat. Only the speaker's response will be counted against his time limit. If the speaker needs the question clarified, he shall ask the Chair, and the Chair shall have the Member clarify his question.

(d) At no time shall the Member asking the question and the speaker enter into dialogue.

(e) This motion is not to be used to ask the Chair questions. Should a delegate have a question for the Chair, besides a Point of Order, Point of Parliamentary Inquiry, or Point of Personal Privilege, they should send a note to the Dais.

r Point of Personal Privilege

(a) A delegate may rise to a Point of Personal Privilege during discussion of any matter

when his ability to participate in the proceedings is in anyway impaired. (For example, if the delegate is experiencing difficulty hearing speakers, or if the committee room is uncomfortably cold.) The Chair shall attempt to address the cause of the impairment.

(b) This point may interrupt a speaker.

Motion to [Adjourn Debate/Table a Topic]

r (a) This motion tables the topic without further discussion or substantive debate/questions.

(b) This requires 2 speakers for and 2 against, and then a simple majority vote.

Motion to Reconsider a [Topic/Resolution/Proposal]

r (a) This motion is used to go back to a suspended topic. Alternatively, this motion is used during voting procedures to reconsider a failed resolution.

(b) This motion must originate from a Member who originally voted to table the topic or against the resolution, and the Member making this motion must provide a good explanation for doing so.

(c) This requires 2 speakers against and then a two-thirds majority vote.

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Order of Precedence of Points and Motions

I. Parliamentary points

1. Point of Personal Privilege (this is the only point that may interrupt a speaker)
2. Appeal Decision of Chair (this is in order at the time of the incident)
3. Point of Order (this is in order any time the floor is open)
4. Point of Parliamentary Inquiry (this is in order any time the floor is open)
5. Motion to Recess

II. Procedural motions that are not debatable

1. Motion for an Unmoderated Caucus
2. Motion for a Moderated Caucus

III. Procedural motions that apply to an agenda item, a resolution, or an amendment

1. Motion to Set the Agenda
2. Motion to Introduce Draft Resolution
3. Motion to Introduce Amendment
4. Motion to Close Debate
5. Motion to Adjourn Debate/Table Topic

IV. Substantive motions

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